

As on a rock of adamant we build  
Our mountain hopes ; spin our eternal schemes,  
As we the fatal sisters would outspin,  
And, big with life's futurities, expire.

Not even PHILANDER had bespoke his shroud,  
Nor had he cause ; a warning was denied :  
How many fall as sudden—not as safe !  
As sudden, though for years admonish'd home.  
Of human ills the last extreme beware,  
Beware, LORENZO ! a slow-sudden death :  
How dreadful that deliberate surprise !  
Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer ;  
Next day the fatal precedent will plead ;  
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life :  
Procrastination is the thief of time ;  
Year after year it steals, till all are fled ;  
And to the mercies of a moment leaves  
The vast concerns of an eternal scene :  
If not so frequent, would not this be strange ?  
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.

Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears  
The palm, "That all men are about to live"—  
For ever on the brink of being born.  
All pay themselves the compliment to think  
They one day shall not drivel ; and their pride  
On this reversion takes up ready praise,  
At least their own, their future selves applauds :  
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead !  
Time lodged in their own hands is folly's vails ;  
That lodged in fate's, to wisdom they consign ;

The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone :  
'Tis not in folly, not to scorn a fool ;  
And scarce in human wisdom to do more :  
All promise is poor dilatory man,  
And that through every stage : when young, indeed,  
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,  
Unanxious for ourselves ; and only wish,  
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise :  
At thirty man suspects himself a fool ;  
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan ;  
At fifty chides his infamous delay,  
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve ;  
In all the magnanimity of thought  
Resolves, and re-resolves ; then dies the same.

And why ? because he thinks himself immortal :  
All men think all men mortal, but themselves ;  
Themselves ;—when some alarming shock of fate  
Strikes through their wounded hearts the sudden dread ;  
But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,  
Soon close ; where pass'd the shaft no trace is found.  
As from the wing no scar the sky retains ;  
The parted wave no furrow from the keel ;  
So dies in human hearts the thought of death :  
Even with the tender tear which nature sheds  
O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave.  
Can I forget PHILANDER ? that were strange :  
O my full heart !—but should I give it vent,  
\* The longest night though longer far, would fail,  
And the lark listen to my midnight song.

